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Anger in Academic Twitter: Sharing, Caring, and Getting Mad Online

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Abstract: This article examines two different cases or "events" in Twitter to understand the role that negative emotions play in online discussions of academic labour. As academic labour conditions deteriorate and academics take to online spaces, they do so to critique, connect, and organize. We suggest that negative emotions may play a productive role in raising awareness of labour issues, as well as serving as a site for organizing across academic hierarchies and beyond the university. Additionally, negative emotions may fuel the production of new networks, personal, and professional connections. However, as we show, anger online can also provoke substantive repercussions, both personally and institutionally. We suggest that paying attention to the role that negative emotions play on Twitter can help academics gain a better sense of how to use their digital labour for collective action.

Keywords: Academic Labour, Twitter, Emotion, Emotional Labour, Affective Labour, Academic Freedom, Adjunct Labour, Anger

1. Introduction

Digital media and digital technologies shape the working conditions of academia, informing research, teaching, and administrative practices and scholars have begun to document the ways in which digital technologies are changing the nature of labour in the University (Poritz and Rees 2016; Newfield 2016; Watters 2016; Flanders 2012). Increasingly, social media platforms play a role in that digital landscape, as academics across university hierarchies are encouraged to develop public digital media presences through the use of blogs, websites, and/or social networking platforms (Weller 2011; Carrigan 2016; Daniels and Thistlethwaite 2016). Despite the role that such media play in academic life and the ways in which social media can shape individual academic identity, reputation, and career opportunities (singh 2017), less attention has been paid to social media explicitly as a site of work and labour and as a site of value to the larger institution of higher education. In addition to reshaping academic time and attention, social media also establishes what Willinsky (2010) has called "reputational economies," in which increased academic reputation online affects the types of academic work that are produced, published, and distributed. While such economies can raise questions about the nature of scholarship (Moorish 2016), they also raise questions about ownership and value creation. As Hearn (2010, 435) has documented, "reputation seekers" do not own or control "the means of our own distribution." For Hearn, online reputation serves as fodder for data aggregators and measurement systems, which are used to increase market value for corporations.

While studies have begun to explore the mundane, emotional, ongoing experiences of academic social media usage (Mewburn and Thomson 2013; Lupton 2014; Veletsianos 2016; Pausé and Russell 2016), research is required to understand pre-

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cisely how social media platforms shape the broader terrain of academic labour and labour debates in higher education, particularly as work in the university is intensified and extended beyond the confines of the office, classroom, and staff meeting. As scholars draw links between accelerated working conditions and poor mental health and well-being (Hall 2014; Bowles and Hall 2014; Mountz et al. 2016), it is imperative that we understand how digital media may be exacerbating or ameliorating those linkages and demonstrate how the "free labor" (Terranova 2000) such platforms demand add to current pressures facing academics. However, as such social media platforms are also specifically designed to give rise to "branded" content, we must question not only how social media may be commodifying academic pressures, but also note how it has given rise to new spaces for discussion, debate, and even organizing.

This article is drawn from ongoing research into the labour of digital scholarship (Gregory 2017) and into the formation of academic identity in the digital age (Singh 2015; 2017). We analyse two Twitter "cases" to study the role that negative emotions, with a particular focus on anger, played in the unfolding of the event. The first case is an event denoted by the hashtag #iammargaretmary, which emerged in response to the death of the Duquesne University adjunct professor Margaret Mary Votjko and became an emblem of ongoing debates and discussions of adjunct labour and exploitation. The second case looks at a series of events involving academics on Twitter whose tweets about race and racism were taken out of context and used to put pressure on their institutions to take action against them. These events generated an ongoing debate online about the nature of academic freedom, as well as about the role of Twitter and the inherent risks of being an academic in public. In each event, we saw a groundswell of emotion, much of it inspired by anger at academic labour conditions and at the state of academic governance. In addition to platform-based sharing, "favoriting," and commenting, both events also generated writing beyond the Twitter platform, in the form of blog posts, and garnered media attention beyond Twitter and beyond the academic community.

While the word "brand" is often used as a pejorative in academic circles, this article takes seriously the notion that academic digital presences and social media platforms "do work," which is to say they generate, circulate, and monetize individual academics, research projects, publications, and university reputations more broadly. Such media presences increasingly play a role in the production of what has been called "academic capitalism" (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004), which denotes the increasing marketization and commodification of knowledge production, as well as play a role in the ongoing "neoliberalization" of the University (Darder 2012; McCarthy 2011; Apple 2009). While not all academic media presences are brands, they are often cultivated, curated, and maintained via platforms that are themselves brands and that intentionally give rise to branded content through their design (Papacharissi 2013, 146). Academic social network sites like Academia.edu and ResearchGate provide further opportunity for academics to establish their academic reputations. However, as Jordan (2014; 2016) found, these spaces privilege those academics with already established reputations and networks over those who are starting anew.

As online spaces, particularly social media, come to be seen as "affective publics" (Papacharissi 2015) that rely heavily on personal "content" generation, personal experience, and emotion, it is essential to pay attention to the risks and ramifications of this work – both for academics themselves and for institutions more generally. To suggest that institutional policies adequately address these issues is an understatement. However, in this article we argue that observations from contemporary Twitter

"events" can serve as a starting point and can help us understand the role that negative emotions may play in the circulation of the event, as well as serve as a case study for interrogating university responses. In the absence of clear labor protections for academic workers such analyses can be used to advocate for policy and help academics navigate online spaces.

While elements of these events can be subject to critiques of hashtag activism or "clicktivism," we suggest the emotional labour they mobilized is productive. It is not simply "captured" by the platform, nor does it go to waste. Rather, we suggest that Twitter is able to raise awareness of academic labour issues across academic hierarchies, as well as beyond the university. Furthermore, these events gave rise to opportunities for organizing and, as these events can "tarnish" university brands, there is potential there for faculty to gain some leverage. However, such tarnishing can also backfire. While nonetheless raising awareness of important issues, online negative emotions can "stick" to an individual more readily than they can to an institution, causing distress, anxiety, physical harm, or job loss, and here we must ask: "Can negative emotions be mobilized online in a way that does not contribute to the already hostile spaces that academics find themselves in?"

2. Feeling Like "Shit" in the University

Numerous scholars have now documented long-standing shifts in higher education that have brought about what is often referred to as the "corporate" university (Washburn 2003; Ross 2010) or the "neoliberal" university (Slaughter and Rhoades 2000). As Beetham (2016, 48) writes,

> these changes can be characterised as: insecurity; rapid cycling or shortened timescales; blurring of boundaries between personal and work time/space; disaggregation of the 'functions' of academic work; continual monitoring and assessment of 'performance'; entrepreneurialism; and the transfer of academic management/organisation to digital systems.

As Gregory and Winn (2016) note, these shifts in labour conditions are often broadly spoken of in the language of "crisis" or as the university in "ruins" (Readings 1996). However, as Winn (2016) suggests, despite the identification of crisis and calls for greater unionization among academics, academic labour conditions continue to decline. As Gill (2009, 46) documents, not only has precariousness become a defining feature of academia (particularly for graduate students and junior scholars), but so has "a punishing intensification of work has become an endemic feature of academic life." Kate Bowles and Richard Hall (2014) have labelled the university "an anxiety machine" and, as Hall writes in a 2016 blog post, as the university is restructured to maximize value, "academics and students are separated and exploited through their abstract labour", or what can be thought of as the time and energy and the capacities require to work. Such separation is as much physical and material as it is an emotional experience of exploitation. Bousquet (2008, 27) has even suggested that those who bear the brunt of the crisis – graduate students and contingent faculty – understand that

> they are not merely treated like waste but, in fact, are the actual shit of the system – being churned inexorably toward the outside: not merely 'disposable' labor, but labor that must be disposed of for the system to work.

Given that such conditions are structural and endemic – and lived out by individuals – it is perhaps no surprise that new spaces for academic discussion and academic life are being carved out in and through digital media and platforms and that those spaces both modify academic anger as well as give voice to it.

As Mewburn and Thomson (2013, 1106) found in their study of academic blogs, academics online "most commonly write about academic work conditions and policy contexts, share information, and provide advice." Such bloggers combine research and teaching posts with broader discussions of work practices. In contradiction to the notion that academic blogging is driven solely by self-interest or the desire to market one's work, such blogs are written for other academics, functioning as both part of the "gift economy" and as a "virtual staff room" (Ibid.). As they suggest, there is no explicit guide or handbook encouraging academics to use online spaces for "speaking back to power" (Ibid., 1111); however, as their study finds, this is precisely how academics are using their blogs (at least some of the time). Blog writing "appears to offer some academics an alternative to resistance, compliance or pragmatism in the face of managerialism in higher education" (Ibid.).

As Mewburn (2011, 321) found, such "troubles talk" online can help PhD students "negotiate and manage the precarious process of 'becoming academic.'" As PhD student Lisa Kalayji (2017) recently wrote on her academic blog:

> Doing a PhD comes with many pleasures and pitfalls. Under the yoke of the neoliberal university, a lot of those pitfalls have been exacerbated, and their costs heightened. The magnification of academic cultures of competition and self-marketing, the desperate shortage of academic jobs, and increasing casualisation of academic workforces bear down on our shoulders, squeezing and structuring the way that we think and feel in daily academic life. There's a lot to be angry and grieved about.

Kalayji's words echo Gill's claim that managing the contradictions of academic labour conditions has become a defining feature of academic life, particularly for those attempting to enter the profession. In this regard, blogs and other social media can offer the necessary (and often otherwise unavailable) space to be angry and to express negative emotions as well as to do the work of personal and institutional grieving, particularly in relation to shifts in the configuration of academic labour.

As such, social media can operate as both crowd-sourced career counselling as well as a bit of therapy, opening up a unique space where academics across hierarchies and spaces in the university can meet one another, relate to one another's experiences, and find some comfort. As Deborah Lupton (2014, 13) found in her survey of academic social media use, academics report using social media not only to develop such networks but also because of "feeling better connected to other academics." In the academic Twitter community, crowdsourcing functions as a form of connective tissue. From sharing references and tips for academic success to solidarity

during the hard times, Twitter becomes an important source for support. Veletsianos (2016) refers to this as networks of disclosure in which individuals disclose personal information, which elicits support from the community. This also speaks to the feelings of care and belonging that Stewart (2016) deems a central feature to the cohesiveness of academic Twitter. The crowdsourcing, care, and feelings of belonging become what Papacharissi (2015, 23) identified as "affective feedback loops that generate and reproduce affective patterns of relating to others that are further reproduced as affect", thus creating a space that is shot through with meaning, personal and social value, and a range of emotions.

3. "Academic Twitter"

"Academic Twitter" is an informal term that refers to the loose community of academics and scholars who use Twitter as part of their academic identities, and recent scholarship (Veletsianos 2012; McMillan Cottom 2015a; Fransman 2013; Stewart 2015; Rambukkana et al. 2015; Daniels and Thistlewaite 2016; singh 2017) has begun to explore this community. Like Mewburn and Thomson, Stewart (2015, 11) found that scholars cultivate a type of reputation and influence on Twitter that is different from traditional academia and that they are "engaged in curating and contributing resources to a broader 'conversation' in their field or area of interest rather than merely promoting themselves or their work." Stewart (2016, 61) suggests that "academic Twitter" should be best thought of as a "phenomenon in which oral and literate traditions – and audience expectations – are collapsed, creating a public that operates on very different terms from those of academia."

As singh (2017, 6) suggests, academics have taken to Twitter because they have found it "fertile for creating and nourishing both ideas and community." Such "fertility" has to do in part with the type of conversation that the platform encourages and the way that academics have adapted this platform. Singh writes: "Despite, or maybe because of, the 140- character limit for each tweet and the ever-changing nature of the platform, people have managed to use and work around the affordances of Twitter in ways that have allowed for many levels of interaction, collaboration, and production of work" (singh 2017, 7). As Stewart (2016, 73) found, it is not simply that the platform affords interaction or collaboration but that Twitter "enables a performative register that academia does not; a personal/professional voice that is distinct from more formal, depersonalized scholarly communications."

Stewart calls this a "hyperpersonal" (2016, 75) form of communication. On Twitter, such hyperpersonal communication, marked by informal, playful, or humorous speech, is rewarded with more engagement – often in the form of "favorites" and "retweets." Such favorites and retweets are themselves a form of affective communication. Additionally, the platform allows for the creation of "hashtags," which, as Stewart (2016, 80) writes, "can be a way to galvanize widely-distributed communities around issues of shared advocacy." As such, hashtags can also be deeply imbued with emotion, which is then activated and circulated through the mechanisms of the platform.

In addition to facilitating new types and tenors of conversation among academics, McPherson, Budge, and Lemon (2015) emphasize how Twitter affords informal learning, highlighting some of the ways in which academic development takes place within the informal conversations on Twitter, which also help bypass the more traditional academic hierarchies. Thereby, Twitter is actively challenging academic norms, and as singh (2017, 66) writes, "Scholars seem to take to social media because it pushes against the very rigidity and constraints of traditional scholarly practices."

However, inasmuch as Twitter may be challenging scholarly norms and drawing the personal, informal, and emotional into the professional, Twitter is also a platform that mimics and capitalizes on a set of larger broader logics that are reshaping the University. As Gregory (2017) has suggested, academics are "increasingly working in and through a set of logics of the digital – and these are logics that privilege connectivity, speed, on-demand access, convenience, choice, personal and personalized 'experience,' affectivity, as well as privilege the capacity for metrics and measurement." In many ways, academic Twitter can be seen as a creature of these entangled logics, giving rise to a set of complicated "digital labour" issues for academics, which in turn muddy the emotional waters of the platform.

Such digital labour issues are directly related to casualization, deprofessionalization, and precarity in higher education. Beyond the desire and need to locate and cultivate community, academics are drawn to online spaces in order to try to contribute to ongoing discussions and distinguish themselves among the crowd. This work entails demands to be "always on," to be perceived as continually "productive," and to be ready to "pivot" in order to embrace opportunity. In the digital factory of social media, this demand can begin to feel like a 24/7 need to be connected, and it can reshape "disconnection" as "FOMO" or the "fear of missing out." This fear can become self-justifying when digital connection is necessary to pay the bills or generate the possibility of future employment.

Such "hope labor" (Kuehn and Corrigan 2013, 9), where one works for experience or exposure rather than compensation, "in the hope that future employment opportunities may follow," informs the background of much of the production of community on Twitter. This is not to suggest that such community is not meaningful, but to make the point that as scholars take to "academic Twitter," issues of career trajectory and future employment are plainly present. For many graduate students, adjuncts, and contingent faculty, social media presences are created in the hopes of joining the academic community – something not guaranteed by a degree or even by the securing of work in the university.

Furthermore, the rise of "academic Twitter" cannot be separated out from the rise of the power of metrics, as well as increased surveillance of workers, in higher education. Twitter is fundamentally a metrics-based platform, tracking tweets, tweet engagement, followers, favorites, and lists, and it offers a whole suite of analytics to individual users. These metrics inform a larger audit culture in academia, whereas Carrigan (2016) has suggested, "we rely on these metrics as cyphers for quality: ways of assessing in lieu of evaluation, assessing others and assessing ourselves." As Moorish (2016) has written, such metrics may even give rise to a new form of "Trump academic," whose motivations "coalesce around work which pleases governments, university managers and students. Now, even a permanent contract cannot guarantee the indulgence of ethical behaviour and academic freedom."

Even when Twitter is used in good faith by academics to participate in conversation, offer support and advice, and to share knowledge and resources, such metrics are nonetheless accrued. In this vein, we see that some academic users of Twitter become what Terri Senft (2008) and Alice Marwick (2013) call "microcelebrities." Microcelebrity refers to a "self-presentation technique in which people view themselves as a public persona to be consumed by others, use strategic intimacy to appeal to followers, and regard their audience as fans" (Marwick 2015, 332). Microcelebrity trades in "affective capital engendered and commodified by various social and new media platforms where identity and brand are merged and measured in likes, shares, follows, comments and so on" (McMillan Cottom 2015a). Such microcelebrity can be

both a blessing and a curse for academics: as audiences grow, publicity can bring opportunity as well as negative attention, harassment, and trolling. If digital media presences, brands, and microcelebrity contribute to the development of academic capitalism, it does so on the backs of individuals who must now individually negotiate the online crowd. Such negotiations are, of course, not evenly distributed. Racism and sexism are daily experiences online, taking the form of comments, aggressions, and threats. Hate messages and death threats are also targeted at academics who express controversial ideas or who take up explicitly political positions. The very experience of building a media presence is shot through with the politics of race and gender (McMillan Cottom 2015a).

The embrace of social media also brings with it the possibilities for surveilling and monitoring individuals. Such surveillance can take overt forms, as University public relations teams monitor faculty and student accounts, as well as less overt forms of "self-surveillance." Social media users can find themselves engaged in what Andrejevic (2002) called "lateral surveillance" or a type of peer monitoring: surveillance that has moved from the realm of law enforcement to everyday life. Twitter, in particular, allows for a "social surveillance" (Tokunaga 2011; Marwick 2012) in which we can monitor what our friends, peers, and connections are doing through social media and in "real time." Twitter's ephemeral nature can create a false sense of security where we imagine what is posted is quickly swept away in the Twitter stream. Such ephemeralness can mask the very real "publicness" and permanence of Tweets, as well as mask the range of actors (such as institutional administrators, institutional benefactors, colleagues, and students) who may encounter this writing. Furthermore, the issue of surveillance brings with it long histories of racism, racial formation (Browne 2015), and gender discrimination and social media continues to exacerbate the question of who is surveilled and whose speech or actions are scrutinized and why.

4. Anger and Twitter

As Bloch (2012, 127) writes, "Academia is an organization that generates strong feelings of shame, bitterness, and anger," but the display of anger within academia is relatively taboo or, as Bloch suggests, a "breach of feeling rules." Despite the prevalence of negative emotions in academic work, the narrative of the university as a space of rational and objective pursuit of knowledge structures those "feeling rules." However, as we can see from the discussion of Twitter, online platforms can be marked and defined by a different set of rules and norms. Twitter, in particular, is a space where not only do professional and personal roles and identities blur but where the platform encourages and rewards personal, informal, and emotional contributions and interactions. As academics come to work in and through the platform, professional "feeling rules" are being redefined in relation to the platform's affordances.

While Twitter can facilitate long-term, sustained relationships and ongoing debates and discussions, the platform is designed for short (140 characters) bursts of communication and for instantaneous and rapid response from both "followers" and those outside one's "follower" network. Communication on Twitter can also move very quickly, as a single tweet can not only be responded to but also "favorited" and/or "retweeted," or shared by others, into their timeline. The brevity, informality, speed, and reach of discussions can make Twitter an interesting, exciting, and diverse space. However, it can also be a recipe for almost immediate (and public) miscommunication, with the speed of the platform potentially collapsing any chance for clari-

fication, dialogue, or debate. The limitations and immediacy of the platform can stymie what Bady (2015) has called "generous readers" and Twitter conversations can easily spiral into large-scale "crises" of communication, without much hope of recuperation of mutual ground among participants.

Furthermore, Twitter has gained a reputation for being particularly "toxic" (Rosenbaum 2016; Carrigan 2017). The platform has given safe haven to trolls, abusers, and white supremacists. For example, the platform now operates as a megaphone for the current U.S. president, Donald Trump, who has used it to berate fellow politicians and target private citizens of the United States (Paquette 2016). The language of "toxicity" has also been taken up to castigate women of colour online. Here debates about the "righteousness of other feminists" (Goldberg 2014) have blurred in larger condemnations about the ways in which diverse groups of activists have used Twitter as a platform to debate, organize, or theorize. We suggest that while Twitter as a platform has several design issues that can and do facilitate abuse, the language of "toxicity" can mask a racialized critique of the diversity of the platform.

But Twitter also provides a space for academics to channel that anger towards finding strength in community. For example, when writing about race and tenure in the academy, Matthew notes that, "when faculty of color rightly fear that their experience with institutional racism is singular rather than part of a broader pattern, social media provide a space to find affirmation and solidarity" (2016, 242). So, despite its pitfalls, a key strength of "academic Twitter" is its diversity, its plurality of voices across academic hierarchies, and its ability to bring to light otherwise untenable conversations, particularly about race, gender, discrimination and labour issues in the university. "Academic Twitter" forms, in many ways, a backchannel to academic conversations that are not often welcomed or given a home in the brick-and-mortar university.

Given the platform's affordances and the ways in which academics are taking to Twitter, it is reasonable to expect that anger will emerge in and through interactions. As Stewart (2016, 78) suggests, Twitter is increasingly being used as a "tactical platform": individuals and groups take advantage of the reach of the platform, particularly through the use of hashtags, "which enable widely-distributed individuals to organize and galvanize around issues of common interest, political advocacy, or defense of what may be culturally perceived as threatened territory." Stewart goes on to suggest that a form of "call-out culture" has also grown up alongside of this tactical use of the platform. "Calling-out" refers to the process by which tweets are shared and retweeted on a mass scale, specifically to draw negative attention to those tweets. Stewart (2016, 82) writes: "The rise of call-out culture thrusts academic Twitter into the messy business of being truly open to multiple publics at once, and forces scholars to navigate the cognitive dissonance between orality-based expectations of sociality and print-based interpretations of speech." Conversely, calling-out can also draw attention to important social justice issues and to amplify the voices of marginalized or vulnerable populations.

However, not all anger engendered by Twitter takes the same trajectories, and below we examine two different cases of where anger and other negative emotions have erupted on Twitter, to examine how these emotions function and to explore their social effects. As the sociologist Mary Holmes (2004) has shown in her work on anger and political life, anger plays a complex role in the unfolding of sociopolitical life, both motivating activity and fuelling conflict. In the case of Twitter, we also see that negative emotions play a vital, often fundamental, role in determining how ongoing

events in higher education are discussed, engaged, and experienced at both a personal and institutional level.

5. Passionate Tweeting

As Marwick and boyd (2010, 129) suggest, Twitter can inspire a need to tweet "passionately" to a networked audience, yet Twitter, as well as other social media platforms, suffer from what is known as context collapse, or "the flattening of multiple audiences into one." As Marwick and boyd (2010) suggest, context collapse can create tension for social media users who must attempt to strike a balance between perceived "authenticity" and "inauthenticity" while successfully addressing the ideal networked public. In the context of academic Twitter, additional tensions are added as individuals attempt to strike a balance between disseminating research, writing, and new ideas and being seen as engaging in "self-promotion" (Stewart 2016, 77). Additionally, as academics gain additional followers or become "microcelebrities", their profiles are subject to increasing public awareness and public scrutiny. While Twitter users may feel they are tweeting to a limited audience of peers, such publicness brings with it the possibility of backlash from both the user's audience, as well as from those who take tweets, as a form of public writing, out of context. In this case, "passionate" Tweeting, which may be emotionally charged, hyper-personal, and even controversial, can spiral beyond the confines of Twitter, fuelling an increase in negative emotions, hostility, and substantive repercussions. To highlight how this can play out on Twitter, we look to three cases where academics have suffered a "backlash" from public audiences.

In July 2014, Israel launched a military attack on Gaza and Steven Salaita, who is of part-Palestinian descent, tweeted passionately and angrily against Israel's offensive. At the time of his tweets, Salaita was between jobs, having resigned from Virginia Tech in preparation for a job at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC). Salaita's tweets garnered the attention of University donors, whose objections, combined with the fact that Salaita's position at UIUC had not yet passed board approval (a routine process that is usually considered a formality), made the university decide to rescind their job offer. This was an unprecedented step and caused public outcry amongst Salaita's supporters who called for his reinstatement and for strong consideration of academic freedom. This was displayed on Twitter using a number of hashtags including #supportsalaita, #uistudents4salaita, #ReinstateSalaita, #Salaita, #UIStudents4Salaita, #BoycottUIUC and #RestoreAcademicFreedom. Hashtags like these provide a way to organize content and networked publics around particular topics or occurrences (Papacharissi 2015).

While the Salaita case shocked a number of faculty, both tenured and untenured, the larger implications of this case suggested that the protections of tenure may be limited online, while clearly sending the message to non-tenured and adjunct faculty to toe the line. Salaita's tweets were evaluated on the basis of a lack of "civility", both by media outlets (Mackey 2014) and by Phyllis Wise (Des Garennes 2014) then Chancellor of UIUC, to validate the decision to dismiss him. This reduction of anger, passion, or outrage to a measure of "civility" allows institutions to control what is deemed appropriate academic speech based on an expectation of civil discourse, the definition of which is set by the institution rather than the context (Cloud 2015, 15).

Salaita subsequently sued and then settled with the University, stating "this settlement is a vindication for me, but more importantly, it is a victory for academic freedom and the First Amendment" (Svoboda 2015). However, this case has had lasting impact on the academy in terms of starting and continuing the conversation about

boundaries of academic freedom in the context of social media (e.g.: McNeill and Zuern 2015; Cloud 2015; Greenhow and Gleason 2015; Moshman and Edler 2015; Macek 2015). Overall, the case has shown up the governance structure within some institutions and has suggested that institutional responses to social media "crises" are highly context dependent.

Saida Grundy and Zandria Robinson, both sociologists, found themselves in similar situations because of tweets that were critical of the structural racism that creates obstacles for African Americans in the US. In both cases there was angry backlash, led mostly by conservative groups and media outlets, claiming bigotry and calling for their respective institutions to take action. Grundy's tweets came just as she was about to start a new job at Boston University, which, at first, claimed she was within her rights to make these comments on her personal Twitter account. However, after pressure from alumni and others, Boston University released a statement saying that while they did not condone racism or bigotry, they still supported Grundy's freedom of speech (Brown 2015). Grundy (2015) also released a statement regretting the way she addressed the issue. Ultimately, this incident did not affect her position at the university. When the backlash started, other academics rushed to support Grundy through hashtags like #SaidaGrundy, #ISupportSaida, and #IStandWithSaida, and like the Salaita case, spawned blog posts and articles discussing academic freedom.

In Salaita's case, public outcry worked towards pressuring the institution to de-hire him, and the support – both on Twitter and otherwise – did not help to reinstate him. While the attention the case garnered made it possible for Salaita to embark on a fairly successful public speaking stint, it was at the cost of a tenure track academic career. In Grundy's case, public outcry forced her institution to make a statement criticizing her tweets, but they still supported her position and did not fire her. In both these cases, hashtags formed a node of anger and activism, bringing disparate groups of people together in their support of Salaita and Grundy, and academic freedom. Not only did the use of the hashtags on Twitter signify support to the people involved, it also encouraged others to participate, affording an "always-on, ambient" network that can be quickly mobilized, especially through prominent network nodes (Papacharissi 2015, 37).

In the case of Zandria Robinson, whose tweets also addressed race, the University of Memphis itself took to Twitter to respond. The university tweeted that Robinson was no longer employed by the university, leading people to believe that Robinson had lost her job because of her tweets. This brought on a fresh wave of angry tweets in her support, before she let it be known that she had resigned prior to those tweets to pursue another job. Again, Twitter played a role in both the call for action against and in support of Robinson. In their statement, her institution (Rhodes College) showed a surprising level of understanding of how social media limits the transmission of particular ideas and how that did not, for them, reflect negatively on Robinson. Interestingly, there didn't seem to be specific hashtags in support of (or against) Robinson aside from #ZandriaRobinson, although there was certainly support for her on Twitter.

Recently, there was controversy around some of George Ciccariello-Maher's tweets, who also tweeted about race, at one point calling for "white genocide" – a term propagated by white nationalists to instil fear about an unfounded conspiracy to destroy the white race. His intention to mock the white nationalist term was taken out of context, again by conservative groups, to the point that his university is now investigating the matter (Flaherty 2017). Drexel released statements that condemned Ciccariello-Maher's tweet while supporting his freedom of speech, but asserting that his

tweets “do not represent the values of inclusion and understanding espoused by Drexel University.” (Drexel University 2016.) In a longer statement, they assert that Ciccariello-Maher’s tweets constitute “protected speech”, but at the same time denounce them while attempting to explain that social media like Twitter “are limited in their ability to communicate satire, irony and context” (Fry and Blake 2016). At the time of this writing, Ciccariello-Maher’s case is ongoing. There are still people tweeting about this case, many directly at Drexel University calling for Ciccariello-Maher to be fired. As with Robinson’s case, there seem to be no specific hashtags associated with Ciccariello-Maher’s case.

While the tweets we highlight are not overtly “angry” they come from a place of frustration towards racism and structural violence. Each of these academics used their platform to voice opinions based in their own research, and experiences – as a way to express their opinions while performing their role as academics and public intellectuals online. Such “passionate” tweets, however, mingle with already affect-filled environment of Twitter. This affect fuels both the backlash and the support the platform can offer. As Papacharissi (2015, 56) suggests affect can be “sticky”, especially as online conversations swirl and can “blend emotion with opinion and drama with fact.” As conservative groups rallied and mobilized their outrage and anger, media outlets took advantage of the viral nature of social media posts. Simultaneously, there was a surge of support from fellow academics coming together to protest the unfair treatment of their colleagues, bringing more attention to the issue of academic freedom and institutional responsibility towards faculty.

These events had both personal and professional repercussions and raise interesting and troubling questions about the state of academic freedom with regards to social media and academic Twitter. Veletsianos (2016, 56) points to a key tension, which is highlighted by cases like these: while academics may be expected to create and maintain a public presence on seemingly ephemeral spaces such as Twitter, tweets and words written online are from fleeting. They can be searched, gathered, and used out of context. In the flurry of online conversation, such words can also “stick” to an individual, who must then *personally* account for their use of language. These cases point to the conflicted state of public, digital, and networked academic work, which both encourages participation in communities such as Twitter, but affords little institutional protection. As Wingfield (2015) has suggested we should understand these cases as “canaries in the coalmine” of the weakening protections for academic labour.

6. Collectivising the Anger: #iammargaretmary

Passionate tweeting, however, does not always result in backlash and in line with Stewart’s (2016) observation that Twitter is being taken up as a tactical platform we can analyse the hashtag #iammargaretmary as an example of collective anger that was able to bring wider attention to academic labour issues. In September of 2013, adjunct professor Margaret Mary Vojtko passed away from complications resulting from cancer treatment and a heart attack. Margaret was eighty-three years old and had taught at Duquesne University for twenty-five years, but when she passed away she had no health benefits or retirement benefits (Rhoades 2013). Vojtko had been earning adjunct wages at Duquesne (between $3,000 and $3,500 per course, a wage set after an effort by United Steelworkers to organize adjunct faculty), working from contract to contract and with little job security. Just prior to her death, Duquesne had failed to renew her contract.

When details of Vojtko's death were made public in the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* (Kovalik 2013), the story was quickly taken up on social media, where the news struck a nerve, particularly among academics. Currently, seventy-five percent of faculty in American universities are adjunct or contingent faculty, with an average pay of between $20,000 and $25,000 a year (Sanchez 2013). Seeing themselves in the story of Vojtko, the hashtag #iammargaretmary quickly formed across Twitter and Facebook. Individuals took to the hashtag to tweet directly at the University, to call for solidarity among faculty, to call for adjunct unionization at Duquesne and other universities, and to share their personal stories. Some suggested they would never work at Duquesne, while others demanded that the Catholic University be held to moral standards. Many used to the hashtag to tweet directly to mainstream news outlet to demand they cover the story. Some suggested the hashtag was a "thread" to be read by any person considering a career in academics. Others used the hashtag along with images of themselves holding signs that read "We Are All Mary". This hashtag came to represent an outpouring of grief and anger, particularly anger at the growing disparity within administrative salaries at the University, and faculty labour conditions (Saul 2015).

While the hashtag drew clear attention to labour conditions within the contemporary university, it also touched a nerve as it kicked off a conversation about education and mobility in the United States. As Rhoades (2013) wrote, when a caseworker learned of Vojtko's death she asked, "She was a professor?" Higher education, and particularly the attainment of a PhD, has long been linked with notions of status, as well as stable employment. Vojtko's death highlighted the disjunction here, bringing to light the reality that adjunct professors are not only a part of the working class, but increasingly, part of the working poor.

While #iammargaretmary and its subsequent discussions were full of anger, frustration, and demands for justice, the hashtag worked to mobilize individuals across university hierarchies, across universities, and outside of the University. Mainstream media outlets such as *NPR*, *CNN*, and *The New York Times* featured stories about Votkjo and the plight of academics. *The New York Times* (Kilgannon 2014) ran a subsequent story about Mary-Faith Cerasoli, an adjunct professor at Mercy College in New York, who was currently homeless. Beyond media attention, the hashtag also helped to foment support for a unionization drive at Duquesne, a move the administration opposed despite a vote in favour by faculty.

As suggested earlier, given the structural conditions of labour in the University, it is perhaps not surprising that academics are taking to new platforms to connect and mobilize. As Papacharissi (2015, 4) has suggested, social media can help to "activate and sustain latent ties", which in turn may give rise to a "networked public". Yet, the success of such a public is often coupled with offline work. The anger surrounding #iammargaretmary helped fuel feelings of solidarity and encouraged offline mobilization. Furthermore, the impact of that collective anger continues as the hashtag is revisited and shared, forming an online archive that can be linked to current and future labour struggles.

7. Conclusion

Passionate tweets can act as catalysts for action, conversation, or censure. For individual academics tweeting in a professional capacity, there is a distinct lack of institutional support – both in terms of preparing and training academics for social media interactions and in terms of assuring support if and when anything untoward occurs. McMillan Cottom (2015b; 2017) and Grollman (2015) provide some guidelines but

urge scholars and institutions to at least start the conversation around what academic freedom means and how institutions can protect and support their faculty, staff, and students if things go awry. On Twitter, there seems to be strength and solidarity available to academics when they participate in collective hashtags such as #iam-margaretmary, where there is access to support from the community. However, race and gender are fundamental to who is targeted or disciplined, and for what reasons. As Lê Espiritu, Puar, and Salaita (2015, 64) point out in their critique of the Salaita case, "it is not just that political and social speech and actions can be understood within a civil/uncivil binary but that certain bodies are constructed to simply be, a priori, uncivil."

Being academics on Twitter is deeply fraught. The already complex nature of anger and outrage online can mean that one is cultivating a personal academic "identity", but they are also participating in a broader "affective public" (Papacharissi 2015) with its own emerging rules, norms, and codes of behaviour, as well as structural racisms and biases. Online spaces are not removed from everyday politics, but rather deeply entangled and forged by them. Understanding that negative emotions play a key role here is not to suggest that academics grow wary of public participation, but rather to suggest the extent to which these spaces are political, social, and cultural lived realities. Rather than see social media as a personal project of self-marketing, we suggest that academics learn to talk about and participate in social media as a fully *social* endeavour, one fundamentally about social relations, their emotionality, and their possibilities – both for destruction, as well as for the creation of new worlds.

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